

1946

HISTORICAL SUPPLEMENT
TO FOURTH QUARTERLY SANITARY REPORT
U. S. NAVAL HOSPITAL
CORONA, CALIFORNIA

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CHRONOLOGY

- 12-8-45: 100 Veterans beds authorized, restricted to surgical cases.
- 3-14-46: Rear Admiral P. M. Albright (MC) USN (then Captain) reported aboard as Medical Officer in Command.
- 5-9-46: Morgue, Unit 1, placed in commission.
- 5-27-46: Construction of new bake shop started.
- 6-27-46: Construction of new laundry started.
- 6-30-46: Unit IV, Spadra, disestablished.
- 7-3-46: Increase of Veterans' beds to 200 for acute medicine and surgery authorized.
- 7-23-46: Veterans' beds defined as available for general medicine and surgery.
- 8-2-46: Unit IV, Spadra, transferred to Federal Housing Authority, San Francisco.
- 11-30-46: Unit 111 galley closed.
- 12-13-46: Approval granted for conversion of Building #543, Nurses Quarters, Unit 11, to quarters for married officers.
- 12-19-46: Veterans' beds increased to 225 for remainder of fiscal year, 1947.

ORGANIZATION

Paragraph 1612 of the Manual of the Medical Department provides for the fundamental organization of Naval Hospital Administration and authorizes such modifications as are necessary in individual situations. Such a situation exists here where the hospital is composed of three units of varying degrees of independence of each other. A flexible plan is followed wherein the administrative functions of each unit are under the supervision of the Senior Medical Officer attached to the unit and each unit is subordinate to the Central Command.

NARRATIVE ACCOUNT

The year 1946 has been characterized primarily by the post-war conversion of this activity to a peace-time status. This has been manifest by a decrease in patient load and staff complement and the closing down of certain portions of the temporary structures built to accommodate the war-time load. The patient census was maximum for this year on January 15, with 2838 patients of all classes and the curve has been downward since. With the close of the year, the patient census was below the authorized peace-time bed capacity.

Separations from the service have resulted in a marked reduction of trained personnel and since early summer, non-Hospital Corps ratings have been removed from complement allowances. These personnel reductions have been met by centralizing activities and by the elimination of duplicating activities. Unit IV, the convalescent unit at Spadra, was disestablished June 30, 1946. Unit 11, Nurses Quarters and Unit 11 Corpsmen's Quarters, have been closed. Wards in Unit 111 have been closed as the patient load dropped, and by the end of the year, seven wards, including the lock ward and brig, remained open for isolation and convalescent patients. Alterations are now under way to consolidate these remaining open wards in as close proximity to the central hospital unit as possible. The laboratory, linen room, central supply, record office, galley, and X-ray departments of Unit 111 have been closed.

Since the first authorization for this hospital to receive veteran patients on December 18, 1945, and the subsequent increase of veteran beds to 200 on July 3, 1946, there have been an increasing number of such medical and surgical cases cared for at this activity. The number of authorized beds has been full or nearly so, since the instigation of this program.

The trend of patient load and staff complement for the year perhaps best illustrates the all-over picture of the hospital's adjustment over the first post-war year.

The total staff personnel was 1654 on 1 January 1946, but had decreased to 617 on 31 December 1946. This represents a decrease of more than 60%. The total patient personnel was 2523 on 1 January 1946, but had decreased to 1152 on 31 December 1946. This represents a decrease of approximately 50%. It may be seen that the reduction of staff personnel has been more rapid than reduction of patient load.

Also, the categories of patients here shift with an increasing proportion of tuberculosis and veteran patients and a reduction of the proportion of rheumatic fever patients. This creates a problem in that much of the light maintenance work was done by convalescing rheumatic fever patients undergoing the program of gradual rehabilitation. At the year's end patients were listed as veterans 216 (in contrast to 26 on 1 January), poliomyelitis 26, paraplegics 36,

tuberculosis 497, and rheumatic fever 198.

With the completion of the morgue on May 9, 1946, facilities for clinical pathological conferences became available. Since then there have been thirty-three post-mortem examinations. Every attempt has been made to maintain a high autopsy to death ratio.

Weekly professional staff conferences were held at which interesting and instructive cases are presented. Internes have continued to make ward rounds at the Los Angeles County Hospital and to secure obstetrical instruction at the U. S. Naval Hospital in Long Beach.

ADDITIONAL DATA

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL MEDICINE AND REHABILITATION

Near the end of the calendar year, 1946, this hospital received a large number of paraplegic patients and in addition, had a ward of poliomyelitis patients, inasmuch as the hospital had recently been designated as a center on the West coast for these two types of cases. At the beginning of the year, the department of Physical Therapy, upon whom devolved all of the treatment of the poliomyelitis cases and a large share of the treatment of the paraplegic cases, consisted of one medical officer who was in charge of the department and of rehabilitation, eight Wave officer technicians, and twenty enlisted technicians. The treatment of the poliomyelitis cases was largely carried out on the ward itself, except for officer patients who were treated in the Physical Therapy Department proper. The paraplegic patients were given heat, massage, muscle re-education and general physical therapy on the wards, and their instruction in walking was done in the department. This latter arrangement proved to be somewhat unsatisfactory, and, after personnel of the department decreased due to demobilization, it became more expedient and finally was found to be much more satisfactory to teach the paraplegic patients on the wards themselves. This provided a competitive spirit between the patients and also gave them a basis upon which they could compare their progress with the results that other patients were attaining.

The practice, therefore, of conducting the majority of physical therapy treatments of both the poliomyelitis and paraplegic patients on their own wards has been continued and has been found to be more satisfactory. Many of these cases, of course, received treatments from the Hubbard Tank and in the therapeutic pool in the department proper. The pool has been a great asset in the treatment of these patients. In addition to the actual physical therapy treatment of these patients, this department has had the responsibility of prescribing braces. During the year, all of the original group of paraplegics who

have been able to use them, have had braces prescribed and have been started out with them. Braces for the poliomyelitis cases requiring them have also been prescribed and received. The braces have been made by a civilian brace manufacturer in Los Angeles who came out to the hospital at intervals of two or three weeks for fittings and deliveries. This has been a fairly satisfactory arrangement but it has not been as satisfactory as a brace shop at the hospital would have been.

At the beginning of the year 1946 the Physical Therapy Department was housed in two units, one being the mirror image of the other. These two were the pools and baths formerly used as a spa by the Lake Norconian Club. Both of these set-ups were kept quite busy during the early part of the year, but as demobilization proceeded it became necessary due to shortage of personnel to close one of these units about mid year. The general physical therapy at present is done in the remaining unit since it is well equipped with therapeutic pool, baths and surrounding booths for whirlpool, heat, massage and exercise. The great drop in personnel occurred during the summer of 1946. During the first week of September six nurses who had just completed a six months' didactic course of instruction in physical therapy at the Medical College in Virginia were detailed to this hospital for six months' training. These six nurses have been rotated throughout poliomyelitis, paraplegic and general physical therapy services. In addition to the practical work they receive weekly lectures in physical therapy. At the present time there are two Wave officer technicians and nine enlisted technicians in the department.

At the beginning of the year the number of patients treated in the Department of Physical Therapy was between six and seven thousand per month, and the number of treatments given per month was over twelve thousand. This has dropped steadily throughout the year so that during December, 1946, the number of patients treated during the month was between two and three thousand, and the total number of treatments was between three and four thousand.

The Occupational Therapy Department, which is part of the Rehabilitation Service, began the year with four officers and eleven enlisted personnel, and during the first part of the year was giving two thousand treatments monthly. In the spring of 1946 an additional occupational therapy shop was opened in conjunction with one of the physical therapy units for the remedial treatment of orthopedic cases. Due to the critical shortage in personnel this had to be closed on July 1st, but the shop is still intact and ready to be used at any time when it can be manned. The complement in occupational therapy at the present time consists of three Wave officers and four enlisted personnel. This is supplemented by three full-time instructors, one in manual training and two in fly-tying provided under law through the State of California and by the Riverside Public Schools. In addition to these people a group of volunteer Arts and Skills workers under the auspices of the American Red Cross help with the occupational therapy ward work in Units One and Three. The organization Arts for National Defense has provided a group of workers partly volunteer and partly paid for instruction in certain arts and crafts in Unit Two, the Tuberculous Unit of this hospital.

Beginning in July 1946, material for occupational therapy appeared upon the catalogue of Navy material in the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery section. Orders placed with the Supply Depot at that time, have not been filled, and, inasmuch as the allotment for open purchase for occupational therapy material is done away with, it has been necessary to supplement material by purchases with Welfare money.

The Educational Services Department, also part of the Rehabilitation Service, contracted rapidly during the spring and summer months, but is still carrying on many of their previous functions.

The Physical Training Program on the paraplegic wards strove for the development of these patients' upper extremities. By midsummer of 1946, however, all the Specialists A's and the officers in Physical Training were out of the Navy, and their functions, with respect to these patients, were taken over by the Physical Therapy Department.

PARAPLEGIC SERVICE

There has been a considerable change in the status of the paraplegic wards during the past year. We have treated well over 100 "Cord Bladder" patients and at the present time 23 remain. The remainder have been as completely rehabilitated as possible, and transferred to V.A.H. and from there to their homes.

The morale on the ward still remains high. Each patient is receiving the maximum of treatment, including physiotherapy, neurosurgery, plastic surgery and transurethral bladder neck surgery when indicated.

The program of concentrating this type of case in one place has certainly proved its worth.

It must still be emphasized that the work of this nature requires a greater number of personnel for proper care.

Several publications are forth coming on the work that has been accomplished with this group of paraplegic patients during the past 18 months.

CONCLUSIONS

Whereas, in the war years, the problem at this hospital was one of physical and personnel expansion to care for an ever increasing patient load, this past year's problems have been those inherent in the reduction of any large activity from a war-time to a peace-time status. Despite decreasing and constantly changing, and often untrained, personnel, this hospital has been able to reach its authorized peace-time status in an orderly manner. Problems have arisen, and in general, the reduction in patient load has lagged behind the reduction of personnel, necessi-

tating increased effort and time devoted to duty by the staff. The problem of securing sufficient trained personnel is that experienced by most Naval Activities during this demobilization period.

Housing for married officers and for civilian employees continues to be a problem. The proposed conversion of the Nurses Quarters in Unit 11 and a portion of the Nurses Quarters in Unit 1 should help to provide married officers quarters. As the hospital is now approximately at its peace-time strength, a base line has been reached for anticipating needs for the future.